

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAJ-01 DHA-02 SY-05 /060 W
-----241518Z 023139 /53

O R 241350Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1928
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSULATE MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0225

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PROP, PFOR, CZ
SUBJECT: "VIGILANCE" CAMPAIGN TAKES QUALITATIVE LEAP FORWARD

REF: PRAGUE 0175

1. SUMMARY: CZECH MEDIA CAMPAIGN AGAINST SPIES AND FOREIGN ENEMIES DESIGNED TO DRAW ATTENTION FROM CHARTER 77 ISSUE REACHED NEW LEVEL WITH TV ATTACK ON BRITISH INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS AGAINST CZECHOSLOVAKIA. IT INCLUDED VIDEO TAPE OF DISSIDENT OTTO ORNEST MEETING WITH ALLEGED FOREIGN AGENT, WHICH WILL CAUSE SOME TREMORS IN PRAGUE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. THIS IS ANOTHER INDICATION OF IMPORTANCE REGIME ATTACHES TO DEALING WITH FOREIGN ASPECTS OF CHARTER 77. END SUMMARY.

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2. DURING PAST FEW WEEKS EMBASSY HAS BEEN REPORTING CZECHO-SLOVAK ACCUSATIONS OF WESTERN INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS AGAINST THIS COUNTRY AND WESTERN INSTIGATION AND SUPPORT FOR THE DISSIDENTS WHO PROMULGATED CHARTER 77 AND SUBSEQUENT UNDERGROUND DOCUMENTS CALLING FOR GREATER FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION. SPECIFIC EXAMPLES CITED BY MEDIA HAVE INCLUDED: THE CASE OF JOSEF GROHMAN,

ACCUSED OF SPYING FOR THE FRG; THE TRIAL IN OSTRAVA OF FOUR PERSONS ALSO ACCUSED OF SPYING FOR THE FRG; AND THE ARREST OF FORMER THEATER DIRECTOR OTTO ORNEST AND THREE CHARTER 77 ACTIVISTS (REFTEL) ON CHARGES OF ANTI-STATE ACTIVITIES INCLUDING HAVING CONTACTS WITH "ENEMY FORCES AND EMIGRE CENTERS ABROAD." WE HAVE VIEWED THESE CASES AS EFFORTS SIMULTANEOUSLY TO DRAW BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC ATTENTION AWAY FROM CHARTER 77 AND TO TAR ITS SUPPORTERS WITH IMPLICATION OF SERVING HOSTILE FOREIGN INTERESTS.

3. THIS "VIGILANCE" CAMPAIGN NOW SEEMS TO BE TAKING ON LIFE OF ITS OWN. JANUARY 23 TV CARRIED 40-MINUTE PROFESSIONALLY PRODUCED SHOW PURPORTING TO DEPICT ANTI-CZECHOSLOVAK ACTIVITY OF BRITISH INTELLIGENCE. THE PROGRAM INTEGRATED NEWSREEL CLIPS, PHOTOS OF FORMER CZECHOSLOVAKS ALLEGEDLY IN BRITISH SERVICE GIVING NAMES AND ASSIGNMENTS, TAPES SHOTS OF PEOPLE COMING AND GOING AT BRITISH EMBASSY IN PRAGUE, DRAMATIZATIONS OF BRITISH EMBASSY FILM SHOWINGS AND RECEPTIONS FOLLOWED BY INTERVIEWS WITH CZECHS WHO HAD ATTENDED THEM RECALLING THE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION WHICH BRITISH DIPLOMATS TRIED TO GAIN FOR THE PRICE OF A DRINK AND A FILM, AN INTERVIEW WITH AN ADMITTED FORMER CZECH SPY FOR BRITAIN, AND SPECIFIC ACCUSATIONS OF ESPIONAGE AGAINST FORMER UK AMBASSADOR CECIL PARROT AND FORMER BRITISH EMBOFFS HERE WILLIAM BARKER (WHO WAS APPARENTLY HERE IN LATE 40S) AND CYRIL JOHNSON. LONDON TIMES REPORTER RICHARD DAVY AND JOURNALIST DOGLAS HOME ALSO WERE ACCUSED OF BEING AGENTS. BACKGROUND THEME OF THIS MAJOR SEGMENT OF THE SHOW WAS THAT ACCEPTING SOCIAL INVITATIONS FROM DIPLOMATS IS IN EFFECT SUBMITTING TO BEING DUPED OR RECRUITED BY THEM.

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4. NOVELY TO THE SHOW WAS THE FINAL SEGMENT, IN WHICH THE NARRATOR SAID THAT AUDIENCE HAD HEARD OF ACCUSATIONS OF ANTI-STATE ACTIVITY AGAINST OTTO ORNEST AND WOULD NOW SEE WHAT THEY CONSISTED OF. CAMERA THEN FOCUSSED ON TV MONITOR ON WHICH WAS SHOWN TAPE OF MAN IDENTIFIED AS ORNEST GETTING OUT OF HIS CAR AND MEETING A MAN IDENTIFIED AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF A WESTERN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY USING THE COVER OF WORKING FOR A WESTERN "REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE" (I.E. OFFICE OF A WESTERN FIRM). THE TWO MEN STROLLED TOGETHER INTO A PARK, TALKED TOGETHER FOR SOME TIME, THEN RETURNED TO ORNEST'S CAR, WHERE ORNEST TOOK A VAL CE FROM THE TRUNK AND GAVE IT TO THE FOREIGNER WHO THEN WALKED OFF. THIS ALLEGEDLY OCCURRED IN MARCH 1976. EMBASSY OFFICERS WHO SAW THE SHOW COULD NOT IDENTIFY THE FOREIGNER OR HIS LIKELY NATIONALITY.

5. COMMENT: THIS REVELATION BY GOC SECURITY OF ITS CAPABILITY WITH VIDEO TAPE RECORDERS WILL HAVE A CHILLING EFFECT ON DIPLOMATS AND THEIR CZECHOSLOVAK CONTACTS ALIKE. IT IS ONE THING TO KNOW

ABOUT SUCH TECHNIQUES INTELLECTUALLY, AND ANOTHER TO SEE THEM IN
OPERATION WITH PEOPLE YOU MAY RECOGNIZE. DIPLOMATS WILL BE
FEELING: "THAT COULD BE ME," AS WILL THEIR CZECHOSLOVAK CONTACTS.

6. THIS IS AN ADDITIONAL UNDERLINING OF THE ANXIETY OF THE REGIME
ABOUT THE FOREIGN ASPECTS OF CHARTER 77, WHICH IN ITS VIEW HAVE
PROBABLY GOT OUT OF HAND. IT IS ATTACHING ITS HOPES TO
DISCREDITING FOREIGN INTEREST IN CHARTER 77 AS ESPIONAGE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROPAGANDA, DEFAMATION, POLITICAL REPRESSION, DISSIDENT FACTIONS, INTELLECTUALS
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PRAGUE00225
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Format: TEL
From: PRAGUE
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Image Path:
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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 PRAGUE 175
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3521087
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VIGILANCE CAMPAIGN TAKES QUALITATIVE LEAP FORWARD
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PROP, PFOR, CZ, (ORNEST, OTTO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/96192bd2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009